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Insufficient experience a barrier for young job seekers

Insufficient work experience was the most commonly reported main difficulty in finding work by young people, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This difficulty was experienced by 19% of 15-19 year olds and 22% of 20-24 year olds who were unemployed in July 2003.

Of the 564,500 unemployed people in Australia in July 2003, more than one-third (38%) were aged between 15 and 24 years.

For all unemployed people, 13% reported their main difficulty as being considered too young or too old by employers. Almost two-thirds (62%) of those who reported this difficulty were aged 45 years and over.

The median duration of unemployment for those who reported they were considered to be too young or too old was 29 weeks, compared to 16 weeks for all unemployed people.

Approximately 85% of unemployed people did not receive any offers of employment during their current period of unemployment, and 76% did not start any jobs in the previous 12 months. Approximately 16% had never worked in a job for two weeks or more.

For unemployed people, 9% reported their highest level of educational attainment as a Bachelor degree or above. For employed people who started their current job in the 12 months to July 2003 (job starters), 21% had a Bachelor degree or above.

Of the 1.6 million job starters in Australia in July 2003, most (90%) had worked before.

Almost three-quarters (72%) of job starters had started only one job in the previous 12 months, and more than a third (35%) were aged between 15 and 24 years. Over half (55%) of job starters had looked for work for less than one year, and a further 40% did not look for work at all.

Further details can be found in **Job Search Experience, Australia, July 2003** (cat. no. 6222.0).

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